

THE
BARREN
TREE.

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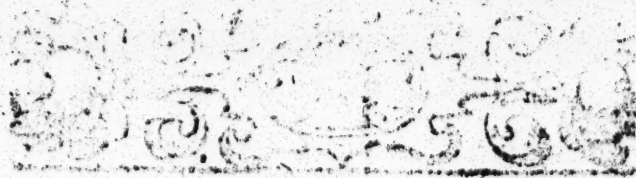
Sermon preached at *Pauls Crosse*
October 26. 1623.

BY
THO: ADAMS.



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This is an excellent Discourse. It
abounds in striking allusions; contains
many original Thoughts; and is some-
what antithetical -



LONDON

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TO THE REVE-
rend and learned, Doctor
DONNE, Deane of St. *Pauls*, toge-
ther with the Prebend-Residentiaries
of the same Church, my very
good Patrons.

RIGHT WORSHPFULL,

Not out of any o-
pinion of this
Sermons worth,
to which I dare
not inuite your
Iudicious eyes. Nor, any am-
bition to merit of my Patrons,
whom I read stiled, Petty cre-
ators. But in humble acknow-
ledge

To the Reader.

Pass no sentence upon them, yet let vs take warning by them. The Remarkablenesse would not be neglected; for the Time, the Place, the Persons, the Number, the Maner. Yet still wee conclude not, This was for the transgression of the dead: but this we are sure of, It is meant for the admonition of the liuing.

Such is our Blessed Saviours conclusion, upon a paralel instance: Except ye repent, YE shal all LIKEWISE perish. There is no place safe enough for offenders: but when the Lord is once up in armes, happy man that can make his owne peace! otherwise, in vaine we hope to runne from the Plague, while we carry the Sinne along with vs. Yet will not our wilfull and bewitched Recusants, from these legible Characters, spell Gods plaine meaning. No impression can bee made in those hearts, that are ordained to perish. For their malicious, causelesse, and vnchristian censures of vs, God forgine them: our requitall be onely pitie and prayers for them. Howsoeuer they giue out, (and I will not here examine) that their piety is more then ours: Impudence it selfe cannot denie, but our Charitie is greater then theirs. Now the holy feare of God keepe vs in the wayes of Faith and Obedience; that the properation of Death may neuer preuent our preparation to die. And yet still, after our best endeauour; From sudden death good Lord deliuer vs all. Amen.

T. A.



THE BARRÉN TREE.

LVKE. Cap. 13. Vers. 7.

*Then said he to the Dresser of his Vine-
yard; Behold, these three yeares I come
seeking fruit on this Fig-tree, and find
none: cut it downe, why cumbereth it
the ground.*

Newes is brought to Christ
of a certaine Iudge-
ment, which was not
more *Pilates*, then *Gods*;
vpon some Galileans;
who, while they were
sacrificing, were sacrifi-
ced; their blood be-
ing mingled with the blood of the beasts, on
the

the same altar. Least this should bee wholly attributed to *Pilates* cruelty, without due respect had of the omnipotent Iustice; he samples it with another; of eightene men miscarrying by the fall of a Tower. No *Pilate* threw downe this, here was no humane executioner: the matter of their death was mortar and stones; these had no purpose to kill them. This therefore, must be an invincible hand, working by an insensible creature: the Instrument may be diverse, the Iudge is the same.

Now *Pæna paucorum, terror omnium*: as an exhalation drawne from the earth, fired and sent backe againe to the earth, smites onely one place, but terrifieth the whole countrey. So their ruines should be our terrors; let them teach vs, that they may not touch vs. They are hitherto but like *Moses* his *Rodde* turned into a Serpent: not into a Beare or Lyon, lest it should haue deuoured *Pharaoh*: but into a Serpent, that hee might be more afraid then hurt. It is Gods speciall fauour to vs, that others be made examples for vs, and not wee made examples for others. Nothing could reach them, let them teach vs.

Of these fearefull Instances our Sauiour makes this vse; setting downe a preemptory conclusion: *Vel pœnitendum, vel perendum*: Except yee repent, yee shall likewise all perish. Such

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Such vengeance is no way to bee auoyded, but by repentance. But here the Iewes might flatter themselues; If we be greater sinners then they, how comes it to passe that wee speed better then they? To this silent obiection, Christ makes an Apologicall answer, *vers. 6.* You are not spared because you are more righteous, but because God to you is more gracious. You deserue such or sorer Iudgements; and the reason of this impunitie is not to bee looked for in your innocence, but in the Lords patience: not because you are not worse to him, but because he is better to you: who offers you space and grace to amend, if (at least) at last you will bring forth the fruites of repentance.

There be some Termes in the Text; (as that the *Vineyard* is the Church, euery Christian a *Fig-tree*, God the *Owner*, euery Pastor a *Dresser*:) wherein your vnderstandings may well preuent my discourse: these known and familiar things I take as granted of all hands.

It is a Parable, therefore not to be forced euery way, nor made to warant a conclusion which the Author neuer meant. This were, when it *offers vs the company a mile, to compell it to goe with vs twaine*: or to make Christs Messenger speake our errand. Such is the trade of Rome; what their owne policie hath made necessarie, they will teach God

to make good : this is to picke darknesse out of the Sunne. No, *Verificatur in sensu suo* : like a good creature, it does onely that it was made for. A Parable is not like a Looking-glasse, to represent all formes and faces : but a well drawne Picture, to remonstrate that person whereof it is a counterfet. It is like a knife : with the haft it cuts not, with the backe it cuts not, it cuts with the edge. A Candle is made to light vs, not to heate vs : a Stoue is made to heate vs, not to light vs : if this Parable, like the Sunne, may giue both light and heate ; the more profitable, the more acceptable.

The Distribution.

Then said hee to the Dresser, &c. That part of it, to which I limit my present discourse, deliueres it selfe to vs in these foure passages.

Consultation ; Then said hee to the Dresser of his Vineyard.

A Complaint. Behold, these three yeares I come seeking fruit on this Fig-tree, and finde none.

Sentence ; Cut it downe.

Reason. Why cumbers it the ground ?

I.

The Consultation. Then said hee vnto &c. *Dixit, non percussit* : hee spake, hee stroke not ; he might haue spared words, and begunne

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gunne with wounds. The Tree had rather deserved the Axe and Fire, then a consultation of recoverie. How easily would man have reiected his hopelesse brother: as when a piece of clay will not worke to his minde, the Potter throwes it away: or wee cast foule ragges to the dunghill, little thinking that they may become white paper. But with God *verba antecedunt verbera*; hee will bee heard before he be felt. Our first Parents, when they had sinned, *vocem audierunt*, *Heard the voice of God*: hee reasoned with them, before he condemned them. If the fathers word can correct the child, hee will let the rod alone. Wicked men vse the sudden arguments of Steele and yron; as *Ioab* discouraged with *Amasa*, *in the fist ribbe*; they speake Daggers points. So *Zedekiah* disputed with the Prophet; a word and a blow; yea, a blow without a word: hee stricke him first, and spoke to him afterwards. God deales otherwise; *Behold, I stand at the doore, and knocke*: hee knocks at the doore, does not presently breake it open. Hee giues vs warning of his iudgements, that gaue him no warning of our sinnes. Why doth hee thus? that we might see our miserable estate, and fall to timely deprecation: that so punishing our selues, wee might saue him a labour.

Dixit, non destinavit: as if the Lord would

Genl. 3.8.

2 Sam. 20.10
1 King. 22.24

Rcu. 3.20.

double and repeat his thoughts, before hee decreed it to irrevocable ruine. A diuine precedent of moderation! If hee that cannot transgresse in his wrath, nor exceed in his Iustice, will yet *Consulere amicum*, aduise with his friend: how ought fraile man to suspend his furious purposes to mature deliberation? It is too common with vs, to attempt dangerous and desperate actions, without further counsell then our owne greene thoughts. So Anger is made a Soliciter, Passion a Iudge, and Rashnesse an Executioner. The wise man first considers, then speaks or does: the mad man first speakes or does, and then considers. Which driues him on necessity to play the after-game; with shame and sorrow to recover his former estate, or giue it lost for euer. O holy deliberation, whither art thou fled? *Dauids* Harpe did cast the euill spirit out, this would keepe him from euer coming in. It is a Porter at the gate of Gods spirituall Temple, Man; that would bee as sure to keep out his enemies, as *Dauid* would haue bin ready to let in his friends. How many desperate preeipices of sin would be prevented, were this rule remembered; *Consule cultorem*? For matter of estate, we are counselled by the Lawyer: for health of body, aduised by the Physician: we trust the Pilot to steere our course by Sea, the Surueyor to mete out our Land: but for the soule let it be

as barren as this Fig-tree, wee take no counsell of the Gardiner. Doe Worldlings consult the Preacher, concerning their vsurious trade before they vndertake it? Do Gallants aduise with him, before they meet in *Aceldama*, the field of bloud? O that they would admit an answer from such a friend, before they giue an answer to such an enemy.

Dixit vinitari. Such is the honour God doth his Ministers, to acquaint them with his own purposes. Surely, *the Lord will do nothing, but he first reuealeth it to his seruants, the Prophets.* Nothing; which may conduce to the office of their Ministry, and the good of his Church. *To you it is giuen to know the mysteries of the Kingdome of Heaven.* To you, not to the world, they haue no such reuelation. *It is giuen, it's none of your inheritance, you were not borne to it.* To know mysteries, *Sapere alta*, not common things. *Of the kingdome* (not secular; such mysteries are for the knowledge of Starizing Iesuites; but) *of heauen.* Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I meane to doe? The matter concerned Sodome, not Abraham: yet was it reuealed to Abraham, not to Sodoma. But doth God need any mans counsell? *Who hath at any time bene his Counsellor?* Will the Potter take aduice of his pots? No; when Christ asked Philip where supply of bread might be had for the multitude; *This he said to proue him for his him.*

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Amos 3. 7.

Luke 8. 30.

Gen. 18. 17.

Rom. 8. 27.

John 6. 6

Numb. 17.

himself to do what he would do. His questions are not his, but our satisfactions. Thus doth he credit his owne ordinance, teaching the world how to esteeme of them whom himself so singularly honors. How poore a place soeuer they find in mens thoughts, the King of heauen and earth calls them to his counsel. *Priest*, was a Title whereof the Princes of Israel were ambitious: they would not, euery man haue written his name on his rod, but in hope that this Dignitie might fall to his lot. Now, is the Ministry of the Gospell inferior to that of the Law? Was the seruice of death more glorious then the seruice of life and saluation? If the Euangelical Couenant be better, is the Ministration worse? The Sonnes of the great thinke scorne of such an employment: what they held an honor, these count a disparagement: in one and the same subiect meets their ambition and our scorne. It is ill when the *Fig-tree* shall despise the *Dresser*, but it would be farre worse if the *Dresser* should despise the *Fig-tree*.

4.

To the Dresser. This is the whole Congregation of his Ministers, to whom he hath committed the culture of his Vineyard: all which, by an *Enallage vniuersi*, are summ'd vp in one *Dresser*. 1. *Quia cor vnum*, because they haue all one heart. 2. *Quia officium vnum*, all their labours meet in that one common terme, the edification of the body of Christ

Enallage
vniuersi.

Acts 4.37.

Ephes. 4.12.

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Christ. 3. It is vsuall to name one *procat-
ris*, for all the rest. *Peter* sayes, *Though I
should die with thee, I will not deny thee.* Did
Peter onely promise this? No, but so said
likewise the rest of the *Disciples*. Had not this
bene a Parable, I neuer found a place of more
probable colour, for the high Priest of Rome
to challenge his vniuersall Supremacie by.
But surely, he will neuer dresse Christs Vine-
yard, as it ought, vnlesse in a Parable. Nay,
would his Instruments forbear to sowe it
with brambles, to manure it with blood, and
to cast *Naboth* out of his own Vineyard, it
were somewhat. But let them passe! When
the Spirit wrote to a whole Church, hee in-
scribes his *Epistle* vnder one particular name,
Angelo Ecclesia; to the *Angell of the Church*.

Matth. 26. 35.

To the Dresser. Dressing implies labour and
heedfulnesse: I might here touch vpon the
Ministers diligence, that Christs Vineyard
neuer lye rude and vnpolishd through his de-
fault. But this age will looke to that well e-
nough: neuer did the Egyptians call so fast
vpon the Israelites for making of Bricks, as
the people call on vs for making of Sermons:
& our allowance of materials is much alike.
They think it recompence bountifull enough
to praise our paines; as if we could doe like
Camelions, vpon the subtiltyre of con-
ditions. So they set vs, as Carriers doe
their Horses; lay heavy burdens vpon their
backs

Reuel. 2. & 3.

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backes, and then hang bells at their eares to make them musicke. But be our reward little or much, God forbid wee should slacke dressing the Vineyard of Iesus Christ.

To the Dresser. Why to him? *Et intercederet*, that he might pleade for the Tree. So vnwilling is God to destroy, that hee would haue vs manicle his hands with our prayers: he would bee intreated to forbear. Goe thy wayes downe, for the people which thou broughtest out of Egypt, *have corrupted themselves*. Why this to *Moses*? that he might pray for them. He that meant to spare them in mercie, meant withall that *Moses* should bee beholden to him for that mercie. And *Moses* indeed chargeth the Lord, sets vpon him with so holy a violence, that as if his prayers could *vincere inuincibilem*, he heares, *Let me alone*. O that every Vine-dresser were full of this gracious affection to the trees vnder his charge: yea, who feares God, and in some measure hath it not? The people forgot *Moses*, *Moses* remembers the people: they could be merry & happy without him, he would not be happy without them. Men robbe vs of our meanes, lode vs with reproches: all our reuenge is to sollicite heauen for them by our supplications: they sue vs, we sue for them: they impouerish our temporall condition, we pray for their eternall saluation. Wee could neuer hope for good

to

Exo. l. 32. 7.

The barren Tree.

to our selues, if we should not returne them this good for their euill.

Corah had drawen a multitude to rebella-
gainst *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Moses* and *Aaron*
pray for their rebels. They were worthy of
death, and they had it; yet would these mer-
cifull leaders haue preuented it: refusing to
buy their owne peace with the losse of such
enemies. Yea, they are so farre from caruing
their owne iust reuenge, that they would not
haue the Lord to reuenge for them. Let vs
fill our hearts with this great example: the
people rise vp against their Pastors, the Pa-
stors fall on their faces for the people: Cer-
tenly, if God had not meant to heare vs, hee
would neuer inuite vs to pray. But as it plea-
seth Him to make vs His mouth to you; so
also, your mouth to Him: both to tell you
what He doth say, and to returne Him what
you should say; to preach against your sins,
to pray for your soules: Doe you heare vs
pleade for Christ, for Christ heares vs plead
for you. Indeed, wee are men of polluted
lips and liues: but as Gods power is not
straitned through our weakenesse, so nor is
his mercie lessened through our vnworthy-
nesse. Therefore as *Paul* had his, *Veni mihi et
non predicauero*; Woe vnto me, if I preach
not: so *Moses*, in effect, had his *Veni mihi, si
intercessero*, woe vnto me, if I pray not: God
forbid I should cease praying for you. But as all

Numb. 16. 22.

our Preaching can worke no good vpon you, but through the holy Ghost: so all our Praying can bring no good to you, but through Iesus Christ. We pray for you, forget not you to pray for vs. Indeed, weake ones pray with vs, malicious ones pray against vs, couetous ones prey vpon vs, few pray for vs. We intreat for you, do you intreat for vs; and that only Mediator betwixt God & man plead for vs al.

The Complaint. *Behold I come, &c.*

This hath in it two passages.

His { *Accesse. Behold, these three yeares, &c.*
 { *Successe. I finde none.*

First the, *Accesse.*

1.

Behold. Ecce is here a note of complaint. He that can thunder downe sinne with vengeance, raines on it shewres of complaint. *Behold the Tree*; he might in a moment haue put it past beholding, by throwing into the infernall furnace. Why doth he complaine, that can compell? *Habet in manu potentiam, in corde patientiam*: there is power in his hand, but patience in his heart. To doe Iustice, we (after a sort) constraîne him: but his delight is to be mercifull.

He *complaines*. All complaine of lost labours: the Shepheard after all his vigilance, complaines of stragling Lambes: the Gardiner after all his diligence, of withering Plants: the Husbandman after all his toyle, of leane Fields, and thinne Haruests: Merchants

chants after many aduentures, of Wrackes and Pyracies : Tradesmen of bad debtors, and fearfitie of monies : Lawyers complaine of fewe Clients, and Diuines of fewe Conuerts. Thus we complaine one of another: but God hath iust cause to complaine of vs all.

Well, if the Lord complaine of Sinne, let not vs make our selues merry with it. Like *Samson*, it may make vs sport for a while, but will at last pull downe the house vpon our heads. *The voice of the Turtle is (not) heard in our Land. Vox Turturis, vox gementis.* True penitents be more rare then Turtles. The voice of the Sparrow wee heare, chirping lust: of the Night-bird buzzing ignorance: The voyce of the Scricchowe, croaking blasphemy: of the Popinay, gawdy pride: the voice of the Kite and Cormorant, couetousnesse and oppression: these, and other Birds of that wing bee common. But, *Non audita est vox Turturis.* who mournes for the sinne of the time, and longs to be freed from the time of sinne? It was an vnhappy spectacle in *Israel*, to see at once, *Lacrymantem Dominum, and ridentem populum*: a weeping Saviour, and deriding sinners. We complaine of our crosses and losses, we complaine of our maladies, of our injuries, enemies, miseries: the Lord open our eyes, and soften our hearts, to see and feele

Cant. 2. 12.

N.B.

the cause of all, and to complaine of our
sinner.

I Come. The Lord had often sent before;
now he *came* himselfe; euen by his Personall
presence, accepting our nature. The Sonne
of God that made vs the Sonnes of men; be-
came the Sonne of man, to make vs the sons
of God. He *came* voluntarily: we come in-
to the world, not by our owne wills, but by
the will of our Parents; Christ came by his
owne will. He *came* not for his own benefit,
but ours. What profit doth the Sonne re-
ceiue by our looking on him? Wee are the
better for his light, not he for our sight: A
shower of raine that waters the earth, gets
nothing to it selfe; the earth fares the bet-
ter for it. He *came* for our fruites: these can-
not enrich him: *Lord, our well-doing exten-*
deth not to thee.

Phil. 16:

Neuer came such an Inhabitant to our
Countrey, as *Iesus*. Had God granted men
the Libertie to beg of him what they would,
and haue it; they durst not haue beene so
bold as to aske his onely Sonne. When the
King giues a free concession to his subiect, to
make choise of his owne sure, without deni-
all; he will not be so impudent as to beg the
Prince. Let vs entertaine him well, we fare
the better for him; the profit of our redemp-
tion blesseth all the rest vnto vs. Farre be it
from vs to welcome him with scandalls, with
blas-

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blasphemies, and neglect. He may then re-
ply, as *Absolon* to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness to
thy friend?* No, you say, we make much of
him, hold him in the highest regard, trust
him with our whole saluation. But know,
Christ fares not the better for thy Faith, but
for thy charitie. Faith is a beggarly receiuer,
Charitie is a rich Giuer. Thy faith is a hand
that takes something from him, to enrich thy
selfe: thy Charitie is a hand that giues some-
thing to him, in his distressed members. In-
deed, *Christ* is the subiect of all tongues, but
hee is not the object of all hearts. The
Schoole disputes of him, the Pulpit prea-
ches of him, Profession talkes of him, Pro-
fane men swear by him: fewe loue him,
few serue him. He is *come*, let him be made
welcome; by setting our best cheare, and
choifest fruites before him. Whom should
we entertaine, if not our Saviour?
Seeking. But, did not He know before?
What need he seeke, that hath found? Hee
that *understands our thoughts long before they
are borne*, cannot be vnconscious of our works
when they are done. My answer shall bee
short: The Lords *Quarit*, is a *Requirit*: he
doth not seeke a thing that is hid from him,
but requires a debt that is due vnto him.
Seeking. This is no rare, but a common act.
It is not *new*. I came: Hee came vnto his
owne. *Nec cognouimus sum*. Yet, a little
while

2 Sam. 16. 17.

N. B.

X

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Iohn 1. 11.

Reuel. 22.

while, and I will come. But *ἔρχομαι ἔτι*: as Reuel. 3. 20. *Sto pulsans, I stand knocking*: so here, *Venio querens, I come seeking*. He seeks continually: will you heare how long?

5.

These three yeares. Much time hath bene spent about the Interpretion of this time; how it is applyable to the Iewish Sinagogue, to whom it was immediately referred. I find no great difference among expositors, sauing onely in their termes. Some by the first yeare vnderstand the time before the Captiuitie; by the second their returne to Iury; by the last, the comming of Christ. Some by the first yeare conceiue the Lawe giuen by *Moses*: by the second, the Propheticall attestations: by the third, the grace of our Lord Iesus. Some resolve it thus; the first yeare was the time of Circumcision, from *Abraham* to *Moses*: the next, the Levitical Law, from *Moses* to *Christ*: the last is the yeare of Salvation by the *Messias*. Others vnderstand the first yeare to be of the Patriarchs, the middle yeare of the Iudges, the third of the Kings. After all this he was intreated to forbear it a *fourth* yeare, till it was instructed by the Apostles: and then being found fruitlesse, it was *cut downe* by the Romanes. But I rather take a definite number to be put for an indefinite: *three* is time long enough to waite for the *fruit* of a tree: such a proportionable expectation had the Lord for

for that Church. If literally you would haue it, I take this to bee the probablest exposition. These *three yeeres* were the very three yeeres of his Preaching, healing diseases, casting out Devils, working Miracles before their faces. The other yeare which he added, was the time while the Apostles offer'd them the Gospel of saluation. Where of the refusers were *cut downe*, the accepters were saued.

He hath likewise waited for the Church of Christianity *three yeeres*; that is, three revolutions of Ages, thrice five hundred yeeres. Or he hath tarried the leasure of the whole world *three yeeres*: the first yeare, vnder nature: the second, vnder the Law: the third, vnder Grace: the fourth is now a passing, and who knowes how farre it is spent?

Or, to apply it to our selues, these *three yeeres* of our visitation, hath beene so many scores of yeeres. Conceiue the formost to be in the dayes of King *Edward 6.* who purged the gold from the rust and drosse of Superstition, Ignorance, and Cussenage, which it had contracted. The Sunne beganne to shine out in his bright lustre: the Lord *came seeking* our fruits; but not finding them answerable to his expectation, nor worthy of the glorious Gospel: hec drewe another cloud ouer our Sunne: teaching vs better to value that heauenly *Manna*, wherewith

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we

6.

7.

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we were so suddenly grownt wanton. The second yeare, vnder *Queen Elizabeth*, of so blessed memory: that Royall nurse, vpon whose Bosome the Church of God leant to take her rest. Shee did againe vindicate this Vineyard, which had so long lyen among Fryars and Monkes, that it had almost quite forgotten the language of Canaan: Shee taught it anew to speake the Dialect of the Holy Ghost. When that Gracious Queene was taken from a Crowne of gold to a Diadem of glory, then began our *third yeare*; wherein our present Soueraigne was sent; *Dignissimus Regno, si non natus ad Regnum*: vnder whom we know not, whether our *Truth* or *Peace* bee more. Onely let vs blesse him, and blesse God for him, that we may all be blessed in him. Thus farre we may say of our Land, as *Sylvius* did of *Rhodes*: *Semper in Sole sita est*: the bright reflection of the Gospel compasseth vs round about. Now he comes this third yeare seeking our fruites: which when we consider, wee can say no more but *Miserere Deus*; Lord bee mercifull to vs: for neuer were such blessings requited with such vnthankfulness. We condemne the Iewes for abusing Christs patience: God graunt they rise not vp at the last day to condemne vs.

8.

He comes to a particular man *three yeeres*.
 1. In Youth: I haue planted thee in my
 Vine.

Vineyard, given thee the influence of my mercies; where is thy fruitfulness? Alas, the young man sends him away, with a *Nondum tempus ficorum*: it is too early for me to fall to Mortification: would you put me to penance, before I have had the leasure and pleasure to offend? He is ready to send Christ away in the Language of that foule Spirit; *Art thou come to torment mee before my time?* But whose charge is it to Remember thy Creator, *Diebus Iuuentutis*? Then the conquest is most glorious, because then it is most difficult. You say, It is neuer too late; but I am sure, It is neuer too soone, to be gracious and holy. The Deuill is a false Sexton, and sets backe the clocke of Time in prosperitie: in the day of trouble, hee will make it run fast enough. 2. In middle age, and now the *buying of Farmes*, and *trying of Beasts*; the pleasures of Matrimony, the cares for posteritie, take vp all the roomes of the soule. Men rather busie themselves to gather the fruites of earth, then to yeeld the fruites of heauen. Heere is strength of nature, and fulnesse of stature; but still a defect of grace. Perhaps, Christ hath now some faire promises, of fruites heereafter: *Let mee first go bury my Father, then*. But (a thousand to one) he finds something in *Deme*, left by his father, that keepe him a *Dominus*, from following his Master. To prevent this, it is

Math. 8. 29.

Luke 9. 61.

NB.

Psal 45. 10.

his caution to the entertained servant; For-
get thine owne people, and thy fathers house: ra-
ther forgoe and forget thy fathers house,
then thy Makers seruice. 5. In olde age:
now the decay of body should argue a decay
of sinne. The taste finds no relish in ryot, the
eares cannot distinguish Musicke, the eyes are
dimme to pleasing objects, very *Desire failes*:
now all things promise mortification. Hee
that cannot stirre abroad in the world, what
should he doe but recollect himselfe, and set-
tle his thoughts on the world to come:
Now faits, or neuer. Not yet: Morositie,
Pride, and Auarice, are the three diseases of
of old age: men couet most, when they haue
time to spend least: as cheating Tradesmen
then get vp most commodities into their
hands, when they meane to breake. Still hee
comes seeking fruite, and is returned with a
Non inuentus.

9.

If yet it were but as the Prophets signe to
Hezekiah; *This yeare yee shall eate such as grow-
eth of it selfe: and the second yeare such spring-
eth of the same: and in the third yeare yee shall
sowe and reape, &c.* the third yeare might af-
ford him somewhat. But doth hee forbear
all trees thus long? No, some are snatch'd
away in the flower and pride of their life:
yea, they bee not few, that will not allow
themselues to liue, but with ryot and intem-
perance hasten their owne ends, before they
haue

The barren Tree.

23

haue well begun or learned what life is: like bad Schollers, that flubber out their bookes before they haue learned their lessons. That in stead of, *Non est fructus*, wee may say; *Non est ficus*, the tree it selfe is gone. And that goodly person, which like a faire ship hath bene long a building, and was but yesterday put to sea, is to day sunke in the Main. We doe not eate, drinke, and sleepe, and take such refections of nature, *ut non moriamur*, that wee might not die; that is impossible: but that wee should not dye barren, but beare some fruits vp with vs to him that made the Tree.

Seeking. It is fit wee should offer our fruits to God, and not put him to seeke for his owne. We should be like those ripe figs, *that fall into the mouth of the eater*. The best liquours are they that drop from their cells, of their owne accord, without pressing. The most acceptable of all oblations, be the *Free will-offerings*. Howsoeuer, let vs bee sure not to disappoynt the Lord when he *seekes*.

On this Fig-tree. It is fit, that hee that plants a Vineyard, should taste of the Wine: good reason, his owne tree should yeeld him some fruite, considering what he hath done for it he may well challenge it.

1. He hath planted vs: we spring not vp naturally, as the Oake growes from an Acorne, the Peach from a stone: but a gracious

10.

Nah. 3. 12.

11.

Prou. 27. 18.

X

John 1.13.

hand hath set vs. *We are not borne of flesh, nor of the will of blood, or of man, but of God.*

2. Hee hath planted vs in his Vineyard, within the enclosed Garden of the Church. Had he left vs to the vnregarded wildernes, without any *Dresser* to looke to vs, there might haue been some excuse of our barrenesse. The ground that is left to it selfe, is (in a manner) blamelesse, though it be fruitlesse. But in *Vinea sua*, which he hath fenced in with his prouidence, blessed with his sauing influence, husbanded with his *Dressers* diligence, forwarded with the beames of mercy, and showres more precious then the *dewes of Hermon that fell upon the hill of Sion*. Where wee participate the farnesse of the ground, are fed with vnperishing Manna, compassed about with Songs of deliuerance, and haue *sete our desires upon* (his and) *our enemies*. Where Righteousnesse is our walls, and Peace our bulwarkes, and the wayes bee milke where we set our feet.

Math. 7. 16.

3. Wee are *Figtrees*: not brambles, no man expects *Grapes from thornes*. Nor Okes or Cedars, to be a dwelling for the Storckes. But *Figtrees*, apt for fruit, for pleasant fruit. If the rest be fruitlesse, they serue for other purposes: but what shall become of the barren *Figtree*?

4. Hee is our Lord, and *Quærit suum*, he seekes but his owne. If our owne Kingdome

vs no milke, our owne sheepe afford vs no wooll, but owne land recurre vs no increase, we are displeased: whereas these be reasonable creatures; but we haue sense about common nature, reason about sense, grace about reason: We are but tenants of these, Christ is Lord of vs: our sinnes bring the curse of barrennesse vpon them, but there is no fault in God, if we be vnfruitfull.

3. He comes *seeking*: not threatening, raging, wounding, not felling downe the tree, nor stocking it vp by the rootes; but *seeking*. *Dignatur expectare fructus, cui licet eradicare infructuosos*. Man is a loser by the barrennesse of his garden-tree: were there not a tree left, God is neuer the poorer.

Now lay all these together: a Lord that owes vs, wee are his trees: to come into his *Vineyard*, where hee may be confident; wee liue on his ground: to looke vpon a *Fig-tree*, made of an apt disposition to good fruit: such a one as himselfe hath *planted*, not casually growen vp: a tree *not neglected*, but whereon hee hath bestowed great care and cost; *wayting*, not destroying: what can we plead for it, if it be fruitlesse: God is our Lord and Proprietary, England is his *Vineyard*, euery one of vs his *Fig-tree*, thus planted, watered, blessed by his gracious mercy: Hee comesto vs with patience, that should run to him with penitence: *seeking*
OUR

our fruites, that should make tender of them vnought; waiting, that might command: now, feare, obedience, and thankfulness, keepe vs from sending him backe with a *Non inuenio, I finde none.*

12.

Rom. 7. 4.

Psal. 19. 4.

Mat. 22. 12.

Fruit. This is that inseparable effect that God expects from euery Tree planted in his Garden. We are *married to Christ*: to what ende? *That we should bring forth fruits vnto God.* Hee seekes not for leaues, buds, or blossomes, but *fruites*. Could leaues content him, wee would not leaue him vn-satisfied: he should haue an Arbour large enough to reach to *the Worlds ende*. Our tongues runne apace, not seldome faster then our wittes. We are Gods debtors, and if hee will take our words, so: that's all he is like to haue. Might buds please him, or blossomes: wee haue intentions to good, certaine offers and shewes of obedience: which we weare like a cloake, or some loose garment, that when Lust calls, wee may quickly slip off. But when he seekes for workes, all our Consonants be turned into Mutes, we are *speechlesse*. O would he aske vs for any thing but *fruites*: but what should be expected from the *Figtree*, but *Figges*?

Of euery soule here hee seekes for *fruites*. Of the Magistrate, that hee bring forth the *fruites* of Iustice, determining causes with sinceritie of decision, and conueniencie of expe-

expedition: being so far as equitie permits, a husband to the widdow, and a father to the fatherlesse. Of the Minister, that hee bring forth the *fruits* of knowledge. *Aarens Rodde* was his Pastorall staffe: in one and the same night, it brought forth buds, and blossomes, and *fruit*. Fruitfulnesse is the best argument that God hath called vs: there is not a plant of his setting, but the very branches thereof shall flourish. I doe not say, our paines shall alwaies conuert many soules; that is Gods *fruite*, not ours: he chargeth vs to be industrious in Preaching, let Himselfe alone with the worke of sauing. Of the private man, he expects the *fruit* of his calling: to be idle, is to bee barren of good; and to be barren of good, is to bee pregnant of all euill. *Bellagerant alij, Protefilaus edit*: but let vs that are called to worke, worke in our calling; otherwise at last, wee shall make but a sorry answer to that Question, *Vbi fructus?* Let vs all produce the *fruits* of Charitie: rich men do good turnes to themselves; as they play at Tennisse, tossing the ball to him, that will tosse it to them againe: seldome to the poore, for they are not able to bandy it backe. Pride cuts, and Riot shuffles, but betwixt them both, they deale the poore but a bad game. The *fruite* of Christianitie is Mercie; when the rich, like full eares of Corne, humble themselves to the poore

E earth

earth in Charitie. Feed him, that feeds you: give him part of your temporalls, from whom you expect eternals: you cloath Christ with your blacks on earth, hee will clothe you with his glorious whites in heauen. Our mercie to others, is the *fruit* of Gods mercie to vs.

13

Fruite. Nothing is created for it selfe, but so placed by the most wise prouidence, that it may conferre something to the publicke good; though it be but as the Widowes *two Mites* to the *Treasurie*. The poorest creature yeelds some *fruit*, wherein it doth imitate the goodnesse of the Maker. We know not readily, what good Serpents and Vermin may doe: yet certainly, they haue their *fruit*; both in sucking vp that poyson of the earth, which would be contagious to man; in setting off the beautie of the better pieces of creation: (for though the same hand made both the Angels in heauen, and the wormes on earth; yet the Angels appeare the more glorious being so compared) besides their hidden vertues abstracted from our knowledge. Of stones they make yron, rubbish serues to raise Bulwarkes, the small pebble for the sling, wormes and flyes are baits for fishes: euery thing is enabled with some gift for the vniuersall benefit, and to produce those *fruits* is their naturall worke.

Aug.

The Sunne comes foorth of his Chamber
like

like a Bridgroom, fresh and lively; and reioyceth like a Giant, to runne his diurnall course, to lighten vs with his refulgent beames, to generate, cheere, and mature things with his parentall heate: this is his *fruite*. In his absence the Moone and Starres adorne the Canopie of heauen; reflecting their operative influence to quicken the lower world: this is their *fruits*. The curled clowdes, those bottles of raine, thinne as the liquour they containe, fly vp and downe on the wings of the winde, deliuering their moyst burdens vpon the earth, teats whereon the hungry fields and pastures doe sucke; yet they expect no haruest from vs: this is their *fruits*. The subtle windes come puffing out of their cauernes, to make artificiall motions, wholesome ayres, and nauigable seas; yet neither earth, ayre, nor sea returne them recompence: this is their *fruits*. The earth, in a thankefull imitation of the heauens, lockes not vp her treasures within her owne coffers; but without respect of her private benefit is liberall of her allowance, yeelding her fatnesse and riches to innumerable creatures, that hang on her breasts, and depend vpon her as their common mother for maintenance. Of the beasts that feed vpon her, Kine giue vs their milke, Sheepe their wolle: euery one payes a tribute to man, their vsufructuary Lord: this is their *fruits*. Fruit-bearing

bearing Trees spend not all their sappe and moisture vpon themselves, or the encrease of their owne magnitudes : but the principall and purer part of it is concocted into some pleasant *fruites* ; whereof they nor their young springs euer come to taste ; but they proffer it vs, and when it is ripe, they voluntarily let it fall at their Masters feete. Neuer did the Oliue annoit it selfe with the owne oyle, nor the Vine make it selfe drunke with the owne grapes, nor the Tree in my Text, deuoure the owne *Figgus* : yet they all strue to abound with *fruites*.

Let me raise your Meditations from earth to heauen : the holy Angels there are called *Ministring spirits* : those royall Armies fight for vs against our enemies : like Nurfes, they beare vs vp in their armes, and (though vn-seene) doe glorious offices for vs, : this is part of their *fruit*. The blessed Trinitie is alwaies working : *Hitherto my Father worketh, and I worke*. The Father by his providence and protection, the Sonne by his mercy and mediation, the Holy Ghost by his grace and sanctification : all diuiding the streames of their goodnesse, for the best behoofe of the world. The more any thing serueth the common good, the more noble is the nature, and more resembling the Creator.

Iohn 5.17.

The

The Earth is fruitfull, the Sea, the Ayre, the Heauens are fruitfull; and shall not man bring forth *fruits*, for whom all these are fruitfull? While all the armies of heauen and earth are busied in fructifying; shall man, of more singular graces and faculties, be idle, a burden to the World and himselfe? Both the Church of God for the propagation of pietie, and the world it selfe for the vpholding of his estate, requires our *fruits*. If happinesse consisted in doing nothing, God that meant *Adam* so happy, would neuer haue set him about businesse: but as Paradise was his Store-house, so also his work-house: his pleasure was his taske. There is no state of man that can priuledge a folded hand: our life is *Vita pulueris, non paluinaris*. Lands, meanes, and monies, men make the protections of Idlenesse: whereas *Adam* commanded the whole earth, yet worke expected him. In Paradise all things did labour for man, now man must labour for all things. *Adam* did worke because hee was happy, wee his children must worke that wee may bee happy. Heauen is for ioyes, Hell for paines, earth for labour. God hath three houses: this is his Workhouse, that about is his Ware-house. Other let vs bee fruitfull, that others benefit may bee ours, our benefit theirs; and the glory of all, the Lords. If Magistrates yeeld not the *fruits*

of Iustice, Ministers the *fruits* of knowledge, Priuate men the *fruits* of Charitie and Obedience; it is as vnnaturall, as if the Sunne should forget to shine, or the Earth to fructifie. God made all these for man, hee made man for himselfe: of vs he lookes for *Fruit*, of vs let him finde it, from vs accept it, in vs increase it, and to vs reward it, through Him, in whom alone wee expect mercie, *Iesus Christ*.

The Successe followes. *Non inuenio.*

We haue brought the Lord into his *Vineyard*, heard him calling for the *Dresser*, shewing him a *Tree*, telling him of a *three yeares* expectation: now, if after all this we inquire for the euent; himselfe certifies vs, *o'v'x iustis nō, I finde none.*

None? Peraduenture he came before the season; *Nondum erat tempus Ficorum.* When should a Tree bring forth fruits, but *Tempore suo*? This is the praise of the good *Tree*, that it *brings forth the fruit in due season*. If the Fig-tree could haue objected to the owner, as *Elisha* to his seruant; *Hecine tempus; Is this a time to plant Vineyards, and gather fruit?* Or as the man replied to his neighbour, that came to borrow loaves at midnight; *Is this a time to lend bread, when my selfe and familie are in bed?* The Spring is the season of fructifying, the Autumne of gathering

Psal. 1. 3.

2 Kings 5. 26.

Luc. 11. 7.

The barren Tree.

31

gathering. Whē the *time of the singing of birds* is come, Then the Figtree puts forth her greene Figges. But *Cum fermento perfundatur pulvis*, when the dust is leauened with mire, and the bands of Orion haue lock'd vp the influence of heauen; Who seekes fruit in Winter? Hee must be content with Winter-fruit. There is the Winter of an afflicted Conscience; no maruell then if neither ripe Figges, nor so much as greene leaues appeare: when all the sappe is retired to the roote, as in extreame cold the bloud runnes to the heart to succour it. When the Babilonians required of their captiue Israelites some Hebrew songs, they could soone answer; *How shall wee sing the Lords Song in a strange Land?* Is this a time or place to bee merry? But did the Lord come out of season? No, hee required it not the first day or moneth, but waited the full time, expecting fruit in the Autumne or Vintage season. *Non ante tempus querit, qui per triennium venit.* He came not with a Trienniall Visitation, as Episcopall Fathers vse to visite, once in three yeares; but euery yeare, euery month in the yeare, weeke of the month, day of the weeke. Of another Fig-tree it is said, that *The time of Figges was not yet*, yet he cursed it: heere the time was three yeares past without fruit, yet he cursed it not. But looke to it; if thou wilt not fructifie *Tempore tuo*, thou

Cant. 2. 12.

Iob. 38. 38.

Psal. 137. 4.

Gloss.

Mark. 11. 13.

Eccles. 7. 17.

thou shalt be cut downe *Tempore non tuo*, per-
ish before thy time. There is not a day in the
yeare, wherein hee forbears seeking our
fruite; yet *Venio, non inuenio; I finde none.*

2.

Psal. 32. 6.

Iohn 2. 39.

*None? Nunquid quia male quasit Domi-
nus?* Was there any errour in his search?
Men often seeke *Bona*, good things, *non bene*,
not in a good manner. Either they faile in
their *Quando*, as Ioseph sought Christ after
a *dayes iourney*; whereas hee is too precious
to be missed one houre: *They shall seeke thee
Tempore inueniendi, when thou mayest be found.*
Or in the right *Vbi*: as Mary sought her Son
in *Cognatione Carnis*, among her kinred; who
was in *Domo Patris*, in the Temple. So the
Rapists seeke now him in Pictures, who pro-
mised to be found in the *Scriptures*. Or in
their *Quomodo*, as they that seeke *aliud pro il-
lo, aliud pro illo*, another in stead of him, and
other besides him, another with him, another
before him, which they doe not seeke for
him. All these seeke and misse, because they
seeke amisse. The world is commonly mis-
taken in their search: *Quarunt bona locis non
suis*, they seek for things out of their proper
orbes. Men seeke Honour in Pride, where-
as Honour is to be found in Humilitie.
They seeke reputation in bloody reuenge;
alas, that is to be found in Patience: *It is
the glory of a man to passe by an offence.*
They seeke content in Riches, which is as if
one

one should seeke for fresh water in the midst of the Sea. But in none of these circumstances did this *Seeker* faile : not in the *Vbi*, for hee sought in the Vineyard : not in the *Quando*, for hee came in the Vintage : not in the *Quomodo*, for hee sought fruit on that Figtree, about which hee had beene at so great charges ; yet *I find none*.

None ? Haply not so thicke with fruites as the *Vines of Engedi* : euery Land is not a *Caanan*, to flow with Milke and Honey. But yet some competent measure, enough to pay the Landlord rent for the ground it stands on ; no, *None*. If there bee none to spare, whereof the owner may make money ; yet, *Sufficiat ad usum suum, ad esum suum*, that he may eate the labours of his owne hands ; no, *none*. If the number be not *as the sand*, yet let there be a *Remnant*. If there cannot bee a whole haruest, yet let there be a *Tenth*. If not a *Tenth*, yet let there bee some *gleanings* ; and that is a wofull scarcitie : if the gleanings bee not allowed, yet let there bee heere and there a *Figge*, a *Grape*, a *Berry*, on the outmost branches ; that the Planter may haue a taste. It is too defectiue, when *Non florebit ficus*, the Tree doth not flourish : but *Quando non erit Vna in vitibus, non ficus in ficulneis* : when there shall not bee a *Grape on the Vine*, nor a *Figge on the Tree* ; this is a

F

misc

3.

Rom. 9. 27.
Esay 6. 13.

Mich. 7. 1.

Esay 17. 6.

Hab. 3. 17.

Ierem. 8. 13.

miserable sterilitie. Some thing hath some saour, but *None* is good for nothing. Indeede all Trees are not equally loaden: there is the measure of a hundred, of sixtie, of thirtie; an *Omer*, and an *Ephah*: but the Sacred dewes of Heauen, the graces of the Gospell, blesse vs from hauing *None*. *I find none*.

4

N.

None? Peraduenture none such as hee lookes for, no Fruits delicate enough for the Almighty taste. Indeed, our best fruits are neuer perfect and kindly ripened; still they relish sowre and earthly, and saour of the Stocke from which they were taken. They are heauenly Plants, but growe in a forraigne and cold climate, not well concocted, nor worthy the charges and care bestowed vpon vs. Set Orenge or Figgetrees in this our cold Countrey, the fruit will not quite the cost of the planting and maintaining. But the complaint is not here of the imperfection or paucitie of fruites, but of the nullitie; *None*. Some reading that Text with idle eyes; that after all our fruites, wee are still *unprofitable trees*: because they can finde no validitie of merite in their workes, throw the Plough in the hedge, and make holyday. But shall not the seruant doe his masters businesse; because hee cannot earne his Masters Inheritance? Shall the Mason say, I will share with

Luke 17.10.

with my Soueraigne in his Kingdome, or I will not lay a stone in his building: Yet good fruites haue their reward; though not by the merit of the doer, yet by the mercie of the accepter. Sowre they bee of themselves, but in Christ they haue their sweetning: and the meaneft fruite, which that great *Angell of the Couenant* shall present to his Father, with the addition of his owne *precious Incense*, are both receiued and rewarded. In their owne nature they may be corrupt; but being dyed in the bloud of Christ, they are made pleasing to God. Yea, also profitable to the Church, and vsefull to men, seems they neuer so poore. Euen a troubled Spring doth often quench a distressed Souldiers thirst: a small Candle doth good, where the greater Lights be absent: and the meaneft fruite of holy Charitie, euen a cuppe (though it be not of the iuyce of the grapes out of the Vineyard, but) of cold water out of the tankard, in the name of Christ, shall haue the recompence. But heere the complaint is not of the meannes, or fewnesse, but of the *Barrennesse*; None at all.

None? Every Tree is knowne by the fruits, it is Christs euerlasting rule. Howsoeuer the tree liues by the sappe, and not by the fruits: yet it is knowne to liue by the fruits, and not by the sappe; for this is hidden. The iust man liues by his faith, not by his workes: but he is

Reuel. 8. 4.

Math. 23. 42.

N. B.

known to liue by his works, not by his inuifible faith. Neither doth the fruit make good the tree; but the tree makes good the fruit.

Opera bona non faciunt iustum, iustus facit bona opera. Good workes make not a man righteous, but the righteous man doth good works. Our persons are iustified before our actions; as of necessitie the tree must be good, before it can beare good fruit. But how shall that tree be discerned, that hath no fruit? *I finde none.*

6.

None? Why this to vs? Why such a Text in such a time? Wee abound with fruites: which way can you looke, and not haue your eye full of our workes? They before, in such places, haue successively commended our fruits. Bee it so: yet *Euripides* being question'd why he alwaies made women bad in his playes, whereas *Sophocles* euer made them good, in his: answered, *Sophocles* makes them such as they ought to be, but I make them such as indeed they are. Their former commendation haue told vs what we should be; but this Embleme, I feare, tels vs truly what we are. Not all of vs, God forbid: here is but one Fig-tree in a whole Vineyard thus taxed, and farre be it from vs to taxe a whole Vineyard for one barren Fig-tree.

7.

Jer. 24. 8.

None? Yes, enough of some fruites, but the Prophet calls them *Ficos valde malas, scilicet* bad that they cannot be eaten. As the fruit of the

The barren Tree.

37

the Vine is commended for *Quicknesse*, the fruit of the Olive for *Fatnesse*, for the the fruit of the Fig-tree for *sweetnesse*; in *Iohannis* Parable. But if it beare not *Fructum naturae suae*, the fruit of the owne kinde, but bitter figges; here had better be none at all. What an vncomfortable sight is this to Him, whose heart is set on his Orchard; after the cost of so deare blood to purchase it, after such indulgent care to cherish it, and the charges of so many workemen to dress it, yea, after so much patience to expect it, (say the Fig-tree does not beare so soone as it is planted, in our Infancie we can doe nothing; in our Iuuentute we will doe little, in Gods service: But now it is growne fruitfull, *Iam non gustare fructus*, not to haue so much as a taste? Yea, were this all; did barrenness ouely vsurpe it: but there is worse than a meere orbite or absence of goodnesse, a position of bitter fruits: *Quasi Ficus, in uento Labruscas*: I find wild Grapes, Luxurient fruits. Instead of the hearty effects which Wine produceth, I am answered with the melancholy prevarications of malice.

Behold the wonder and spectacle of vnthankfulness; among all Gods creatures, Man, and among men, the barren Christian. Though Israel play the Harlot, yet let not that abtransgresse. What may be expected from the wilde Forrest of Paganisme, when the Gar-

Ephes. 5. 12.

Isa. 61. 1.

3
Esay 5. 2.

Isa. 61. 1.
Isa. 61. 1.

Isa. 61. 1.

Isa. 61. 1.
Hoses 4. 13.

den of Eden yeelds such fruits: The sweet fruit of the Spirituall Fig-tree is *Mercy*: our God is the God of loue, our Saviour is the Prince of Loue, the Church is knit together in Loue: our Roote is Loue, our Sappe is Loue, our Ligaments Loue: now if we shal sucke the bloud one of another, violate the relations of peace, concoct all our moisture into malice; here is worse then, *Invenio fructum nullum; I finde none*: for *Invenio fructum in aliam; I finde curled fruits*. We are growne unnatural; the hand scratcheth the eye, the mouth biteth the hand: thornes and briars entwine, and embrace one another, while (against all nature) Fig-trees doe youke one another. Lord, thou hast sown good seed in thy field, whence then hath it Tares? Here is more fruit then God would haue; but for that he expects, *I finde none*.
 8. When wee are filled with his blessings, Christ lookes for our prayes; when wee have eaten and are fat, that wee should worship him. What fruit finds he? We sit downe to eat and drinke, and rise up to play: for praying, playing. When wee are scourged, hee looks for our humiliation and penance, Sure, in their affliction they will seeke me. What fruit finds he? Lord, thou hast smitten them, but they have not sorrowed; an insensible desperatenesse. In this case let vs pray; Lord, lesse of the fruits wee have, and more of them wee should

Math. 13. 27.

Psal. 22. 29.
I Cor. 10. 7.

Esay 26. 16.

Ier. 5. 3.

should haue. *Instead of righteousnesse, a cry:*
a cry indeed; a roaring cry of the oppressors,
and a mourning cry of the oppressed. *Hæc*
non sunt placido suscipienda sinu.

Elay. 5. 7.

Our Bells ring, our Chimneis smoke, our
Fields reioyce, our Children dance, our selus
sing and play; *Iouis omnia plena.* But when
Righteousnesse, hath sown, and comes to
reape, here is no haruest; *οὐχ ἔστι καρπός, ἡ δὲ*
none. And as there was neuer lesse wisdom
in Greece, then in time of the Seuen Wise
men: so neuer lesse pietie among vs, then
now, when vpon good cause most is expe-
cted. When the Sunne is brightest, the Stars
be darkest: so the clearer our light, the more
gloomy our life with the deeds of darkenes.
The Cimerians, that liue in a perpetuall mist,
though they deny a Sunne, are not condem-
ned of impietie, but of ignorance: but *Ana-*
xogoras, that saw the Sunn, and yet denied it,
is not condemned of ignorance, but of impi-
etie. Former times were like *Leah*, bleare-
eyed, but *fruitfull*: the present, like *Rachel*,
faire, but *barren*. We giue such acclamation
to the Gospell, that we quite forget to ob-
serue the Law. As vpon some solemne Festi-
vall, the bells are rung in all steeples, but
then the Clockes are tyed vp: there is a great
vntun'd confusion and clangor, but no man
knowes how the time passeth, So in this vni-
uersall allowance of libertie by the Gospell,
(which

which indeed reioyceth our hearts, had wee the grace of sober vsage) the Clocks that tel vs how the time passes; Truth and Conscience, that shew the bounded vse, and decent forme of things, are tyed vp, and cannot be heard. Still *Fructum non inuenio, I finde no fruits*. I am sorry to passe the Figtree in this plight: but as I finde it, so I must leaue it, till the Lord mend it. So I come to

The Sentence. *Cut it downe.*

I.

A heauy doome! Alas, will nothing else expiate the fault? May not the lopping off some superfluities recouer it? Take from the Sinner, the obiekt of his vicious error: deface the Harlots beautie, that bewitcheth the Lasciuious: pull the cuppe from the mouth of the Drunkard: Nauseate the stomach of the Rytous: strip the Popin- iay of her pyed Feathers: rust the Gold, van- ish the riches of the Couetous: take away *Micah's gods*, perhaps he will make him no more. If this will not doe, cut off some of the armes & branches: weaken his strength, ficken his body, lay him groaning and blee- ding on the bed of sufferance: grieue his heart-strings with the sense and sorrow of his sinnes: any thing rather then *Cut it down*: alas no fruit can grow on it then, but sad de- spaire. A mans house is foule, or a little de- cayed, wil he pul it down or rather repaire it?

There

The barren Tree.

41

Iob 14.8.

There is hope of a Tree, though the root waxe o'le in the earth, and the stock die in the ground; yet the springs of water may put new life into it : but once cut downe, all hope is cut down with it. When a man hath taken delight in a Tree, conueniently planted in his garden; what varietie of experiments will he vse, before he cuts it downe? Alas, thus poore silly men, we reason: we measure things that be vnmeasurable, by things that be measurable, by things that be miserable. What wee in a foolish pittie would doe, wee thinke God in his mercifull wisdome should doe. Yet which of vs would endure a dead Tree three yeeres together in his Orchard? We would say, If it will not beare fruit, to cheere vs; it shall make a fire, to warme vs. But the Lord hath bene six and thirtie Moones gracious in his forbearance, giue him now leane to bee iust in his vengeance. If so much indulgence cannot recouer it, there is little hope of it: Cut it downe.

Cut it downe. Who must doe this? The dresser. An vnpleasing office to him, that hath bestowed so much labour vpon it, esteemed it so precious, hoped for some reward at his Masters hand for his diligence about it; now to giue the fatall blow, to *Cut it downe*? And if it must fall, let it be *Mann aliena, non sua*, let anothers hand doe it. *Hagar* will not behold her dying Sonne; dye he must, she was

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Genes. 21.

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perswaded; *Modo non videam, Let me not see the death of the Childe.* But hee must obey; *Arbor non est Cultoris, sed Patrisfamilias*: the Tree is not the Dressers, but the Lords; and his owne is at his owne disposing: *Cut it downe.*

3.

1 Cor. 5.

1. Tim. 1. 20.

Cut it downe. But how? How can the Minister be said to cut downe a barren soule? Some may conceiue here a reference to Excommunication: Whether the *Greater*, which deprives a man of all benefit by the Churches publike Prayers, and the Societie of Christians. Which St. Paul calls, *Tradere Satana, to deliuer vnto Satan*: so himselfe Excommunicated *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, *deliuering them vnto Satan*: a miserable condition, to be subiected to a slaue, to a dogge, a drudge; but then especially fearefull, when God grants vnto Satan a Writ or facultie, *Pro excommunicato capiendo*. The ignominy of ignominy; besides the perill: For as Christ protecteth all the Trees in his Vineyard; so if any be transplanted to the wilde desert, they are vnder the god of this world. Or the *Lesse*; which is indeed, no other properly, then an Act of the Churches Discipline, whereby she corrects her vnruely children: that smarting with the absence of wonted comforts, they may be humbled by repentance, and so recouer their pristine state. This censure may bee either to cruell,

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*Approved by
the Counc. of
Trent. Sess. 25.*

or to triuiall. The Church of Rome grants Excommunications for things lost : a man hath lost his horse, he may haue an Excommunication against him that detaines him : so the Father may hap to Excommunicate his owne Sonne, and for the body of a Iade, hazard the soule of his Child. Yea, which is worse, they publish Excommunications for finnes not yet committed : The Lord of a Mannor hath set a rowe of young Elmes, he may haue an Excommunication against all those that shall do them any harme. This is to hang a man, before he hath done the fact that deserues it. These ir-rite, forcelesse, bug-bears Excommunications, the ridiculous affrontments of a mercenarie Power, are not vnlike those old night spels, which blind people had from mungrel Witches, to set about their Orchards and Houses; antidotes and charmes against theeuing ; wherein distrusting the prouidence of God, they made themselves bebolding to the Deuill for safetie. Creditors, that would bee paid in their moneys, may procure an Excommunication against their Debtors, if they pay not by such a day. This were an excellent proiect for you Citizens, a rounder course then arrests and tedious trialls at Law. But it is to bee doubted, that your Debtors would feare the Popes Parchment lesse then the Scriueners, and an

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Excommunication farre lesse then an Out-larie. There but foure things exempted from the power of their Excommunication, as *Naarrus* notes : a Locust, an Infidell, the Deuill, and the Pope : so he hath matched them, so let them goe together. For the Excommunicate must bee a man, a Christian, mortall, and an Inferiour : now the Locust is not a man, the Infidell is not a Christian, the Deuill is not mortall, and the Pope hath no Superior. But too much of that; this is a Parable, and heere is no foundation for such a building.

Cut it downe. How ? With an Axe of materiall yron ? This were an exposition fit for *Doway*, or the Gunpowder-Engineers : that by *Cutting it downe*, vnderstood, *Blow it up* : turning their Axe to a Petarre. Had God said to them, *Cut it downe*; the axe had bin instantly heaved vp: yea, they did it, when God said no such thing. Rather then faile of cutting it downe, they would haue stockd it vp, roote and all : this is their mercie. But the Spirituall Axe is to cut downe, *Culpas, non Animas* : when we reade of *cutting downe*, remember it is meant of mens finnes, not of their soules. Preachers indeed doe wound; but it is *Gladio oris*, not *ore gladij* : with the Sword of the Spirit, not a *Ronillac's* Knife. If God had ment such a *cutting downe*,
Nero

Nero had bene a fitter Instrument then Paul. We read, that *their sound went through the World*: but that their Sword went through the World, we neuer read.

Cut it downe. How then? *Succide*, that is, *Succidendam minare*; threaten that I will cut it downe. *Cast them out of my sight*; *Eijce*, that is, *Eijciendos pronuncia*; say that I will reiect them. *Quod moritur, moriatur*: *Quod succidendum est, succidatur*: That which dyeth, let it die. God sometimes sends such farewells and defiances to sinners that will not repent. Ephraim is ioyned to Idols, let him alone. If they wil not be perswaded to retorne, let them go on to their ruine, let them alone. If any man will be uniuersally filthy, let him be filthy still, let them perish. *A beat, pereat. profundat, perdat*.

Cut it downe. This was *Sententia*, the sentence of his mouth: but it may be this was not *Consilium cordis*, the purpose of his heart. *Sape Deo imitante quod peccans meretur, peccanti non fit quod Deus imitatur*. Nor can this tax God of levity: for he that speaks with condition of repentance, may change his word without suspition of lightnesse. *Tu muta sententiam tuam, Deus mutabit suam*. Thus was Ninueh cut downe: *conuersus in malum, ut edificaretur deus*: of the subuersion was menaced, the conuersion was intended. The Father shuts his rebellious Sonne out of

Plal. 19.

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Ierc. 15. 1.

Zach. 11. 9.

Hosea 4. 17.

Reuel. 22. 11.

6.

Aug.

doores, will not allow him a lodging, not so much as among his seruants : yet hee does not meane to let him perish with hunger and cold in the streets : but when hee hath well smarted for his disobedience, vpon his humble submission he is re-entertained. The very mercies of the wicked are cruell, but the very iudgements of God are sweet. This *Cutting downe*, is *Medicinale*, not *mortale* : *Disciplinans*, not *eradicans* : for restitution, not destitution ; for remedie, not for ruine. Indeed, if all this denuntiation and threatning cannot perswade them to returne, then comes their finall perdition : when they haue cut off themselves impenitently, God will cut them off impartially. But if we turne to deprecation and repentance, he will turne to commiseration and forgiuenesse. The Tree is barren, and the Lord saies, *Cut it downe* : the Tree fructifies, and he will say, *Let it stand*. O then let vs humble our selues, and with seasonable repentance *Cut downe* our sinnes, that this terrible Sentence may neuer *Cut downe* our soules.

The Reason. *Why cumbereth it the ground ?*

God is an vnderpendant Lord, and needes not giue a reason of his doings : for who can call him to account? *Cur ita facis ?* His iudgements are alwaies manifest, they are

are alwaies iust : nor doth he things because they are good, but they are therefore good because hee doth them. Should hee make short worke on the earth, and dispatch all barren Trees in a moment : yet *thou continu-est holy, O thou worship of Israel*. If he strickes vs, we are not wronged ; it is our desert, and his Iustice. If he spares vs, we haue not merited ; It is his mercie. *Huic fit misericordia, tibi not fit iniuria* : that man receiues mercie, thou hast no iniurie. Not that hee might bee iustified, and the mouth of all wickednesse stopped, hee is content to giue a reason of this sentence. Thinke not I deale hardly with this Figtree ; let vs conferre together, and heare one another with patience. I will shew thee sufficient reason of cutting it downe : doe thou shew mee some cause why it should stand. My reason is, *It cumberes the ground. Terram reddit otiosam, inutilem*. It is not onely barren *Formaliter*, but *Effectiue*. In a word. 1. It does no good. 2. It does much harme.

First, It does no good, therefore is vn-worthy of the nourishment, *Terra bona*, and *Gens mala* ; are an ill match : an opulent Land, and a pestilent People. *Peccatum non est dignus pane quo uescitur*. The wicked man is not worthy of the bread hee eats, of the water he drinks, of the ayre he breathes, of the ground hee goes on. The rich thinks him

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himselfe worthy of delicate viands, costly garments, dutifull attendance, *Quia Dives*, because he is rich: yet he may be not worthy of a crumme, a rag, a respect, *Quia malus*, because he is euill. It will one day grieue such fruitles *Nabals*, when they must receiue a multiplicitie of torments, according to the number of their abused benefis: and they wil wish that they had not fared so well vpon carth, that they might fare lesse ill in Hell. They liue in the Vineyard, eate the fat, and drinke the sweet; turning all this iuyce, not into fruitfull clusters, for the behoofe of Gods seruants; but into their owne armes and branches: rayling their Houses out of the ruines of Gods House. What good doe they? Cut them downe, *Why canber they the ground?* It is fit, that the *Riches of the sinner should bee laid up for the righteous: dentur dignioribus.*

Eccles. 2. 26.

3.

But if God should at once cut down all the barren Trees among vs, there neuer was such a cry in Egypt, as there would be about *London*. What innumerable swarmes of nothing does beleaguer this Citie: men and women, whose whole imployment is, to goe from their beds to the Tap-house, then to the Play-house, where they make a match for the Brothel-house, and from thence to bed againe. To omit the dissolatory Christians, that weare out the pavement of this great Temple with their feet, but leaue euer touch

The barren Tree.

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touch stone of it with their knees; that are neuer further from God, then when they are nearest the Church. To omit that rabble of begging and pilftring vagabonds, that like beasts, know no other end of their creation, but recreation; but to eate, and drinke, and sleepe. What an army of these might bee mustred out of your Suburbs? But that Idleness hath disabled them to any seruice: they are neither fit for God nor man. Did they yet but like wormes and insects, spend vp the corruption of the Land, and leaue vs the lesse, it were somewhat. But they are worse, euen diseases and vnwholesome ayres, to breed infection among vs. Let Authority looke to their castigation, or answere for their mischiefes: so farre as they deserue, let them not be spared; Cut them downe, *Why cumber they the Ground?*

The barren Tree doth no good you see; but that is not all: It doth much hurt, and that in two respects.

1. It occupieth the roome, where a better Tree might grow. The Kingdome of God shall be taken from you, and giuen to a Nation that will bring forth the Fruits thereof. A fruitfull Nation would bee content with dwelling. Christ foretels this, *For as many as be of the seed of the woman, shall be broken off, that we (in the places) might be grafted in.* *Friend, comest thou in hither, not hauing*

Math. 21. 43.

Rom 11. 19.

Mat. 22. 12.

Psal. 101. 8.

on a wedding garments? Why dost thou vsurp the seate, where a worthy guest might sit? Thus *David* vsed to purge his Court; admitting the righteous into the offices of the vn-righteous. As in case of calamitie, the godly are deliuered out of trouble, and the wicked comes in his roome: so in case of felicity, the vngodly shall be turned out of their happi- nesse, and the righteous shall come in their stead.

A Iudge is corrupt; he is girded with Iu- stice, but the girdle saggeth to that side where the purse hangeth; God will cut him down; here is roome for a good man, that will doe equitie. A Magistrate is partiall, and drawes the Sword of Iustice in his owne quarrell; which he puts vp in the cause of Christ: he must be cut down, here is roome for one that will loue and adhere to the truth. An office is abused by him that holds it; hee bought deare, and hee cannot sell cheape: it is time he were cut downe; this place will main- taine a man, that will maintaine the place with vprightnesse. A Minister is barren, hath no milke in his breasts: *Ministerium eius accipiat alter*; Let another take his office; here is roome for one that will feed the peo- ple. A prophane Barron will let none into the Lords Vineyard, but at the Non-licen- Gate; by which good men will neuer enter: his Clarke shall be Simon, himselfe will bee

Acts. 1. 20.

Iudas.

The barren Tree.

Magus : vengeance shall cut him downe; here is roome for one that will freely put faithfull Labourers into the Vineard. There growes an Oppressor, sculking in a corner; the needy cannot finde him, or if they doe, they find no fruit from him; Cut him down, here is roome for one that will pitie the poore. The Lord will roote out such bastard Plants, and replenish his Garden with fruitfull Trees.

2 It drawes away nourishment from better Plants, that would beare vs fruits. For this Christ denounced a woe to those Iewish Clarkes, that keeping the Keyes of heauen, would *neither enter themselves, nor suffer others*. What should become of them, that wil neither do good, nor suffer good to be done, but cutting downe? A great Oake pines all the vnderwood neere it, yea spoiles the grasse that should feed the cattell. A great Oppressor engrosseth all round about him, till there bee no place left for a fertile Tree. Meane while, himselfe hath onely some leaues, to shadow his Sycophants; but no fruit, vlesse Bramble-berries, and such as the Hogs will scarce eate.

All couet to be great Trees, for so they think good. The Bryar would grow vnto the height of the Maple, the Maple would bee as tall as the Cedar, the Cedar as strong as the Oake, and these so spread their rootes, till

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Matt. 23. 13.

Esay 5. 8.

7.

they stauie the rest by an insensible soaking. When mother earth, the Church, would deriue her sap to some young hopefull Plant, the se intercept it. There is maintenance due to the Minister, but the barren Impropiator stands in his way, & sucks it al from him: perhaps he leaues him some few drops, to coole his temples, but not enough to preserue life.

8.

But the famished tree cries against him that drawes the life from it, & yeelds no fruit; and God will heare it, *Abscinde, cut it downe*. How charitable would *Lazarus* haue bene, had he bene owner of *Dives* his estate? How would *Mordecai* haue promoted the good of Israel, had he bene as great a fauourite as *Haman* was? How freely would the cōscionable man giue spiritual preferments, were he a Patron? He that feares God, would iustly render the Church her dues, did hee driue such trades, and dwell in such houses, as you do. But that God, who disposeth all as it pleaseth him, mend all when it pleaseth him, euen for his owne mercies sake.

Thus from a plaine Text I haue deriued you familiar perswasions: for I came not hitherto satisfie the curious head, but the honest heart. I shew it but two considerations more, and I haue done.

9.

First, the Lord hath shewed the way to be fruitful, by his owne example. He owes vs nothing: if he withhold good things, he can-

The barren Tree.

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not challenge him: if he sends vs good things, we are bound to thanke him. The last yeare; how generall was the complaint all over this Kingdome: The Mower could not fill his sythe, nor the binder vp of sheaves his bosome. The beasts perished for want of fodder, yea, children dyed in the street with hunger: the poore Father not being able with all his weekes labour to buy them (onely) bread. The fields were thin, and the barnes thinner: little in many places there was to gather, and the vnseasonable weather preuented the gathering of that little. The emptines of their bowels did iustly fill our bowels with compassion: Famine is a fore plague. Wee then cryed vnto the Lord for fruits, and he heard vs: Loe, in how plentiful a haruest hee hath answered our desires, to his owne praise, and our comfort! Yea, hee concluded all with songs and triumphs, a ioyfull haruest-home; the best sheafe of our Wheate, the best grape of the Vintage, the best flower of our garland, the best fruit of that royall Tree, the safe returne of our gracious Prince. These be the fruits of his mercie to vs, where be the fruits of our thankfulnessse to him:

Secondly, the barren Figtree is of small use, miserable, and so much the more, as it is barren in the Vintage. The Vine fruitlesse, is of all trees most vfelesse. It is compared to noble and worthy things: to the good wo-

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Ezech. 17. 3.

Plal. 122. 3.

Iohn 15. 1.

Iudg 9. 13.

Math. 5. 13.

man, *Vitis inascent vitis*: to the best man, *I am the true Vine*: it cheers the heart of God and man. But if barren, it is good for nothing, not so much as to make a pinne to hang a hat on. Oakes and Cedars are good for building Poplars for Pales, very bushes for hedging, doted wood for firing: but the fruitles Vine is good for nothing. Salt keepes other things from putrefying, but if it selfe be putrefyed, what shall season it? A sweet Singer delights vs all; but *Quis medebitur cantatori a Serpente percussa*? If a Serpent hath stung him, who shall recouer his voice? If the eye be blind, what shall looke to the eye?

Ad nihilum valet, quod non valet ad finem suum. It is good for nothing, that is not good for the end it was made. If a Knife bee not good to cut, we say it is good for nothing: yet may some other vse be inuented for it. If a Plough be not good to breake the ground, we say it is good for nothing, yet it may stop a gap. If a hound be not good to hunt, we say he is good for nothing, yet may he in the night giue warning of a theefe. But if a *Fig-tree*, a Professor be not good for fruit, he is indeed, good for nothing. The refuse of other things haue their vse: sowre Wine will make Vineger, olde Rags make Paper, Lees are for Dyers, Soile is good to fowle the Land, Pot-sheards and broken tiles to build high waies; all good for somewhat: yea, they are good to fowle the

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the combings of haire; Ladies and Gentlewomen know whether they be good for any purpose or no. But the fruitlesse Vine, the flourelesse Salt, the lightles Lambe, the Figlesse Figge-tree, the gracelesse Christian, is good for nothing.

We all haue our Stations in the Vineyard, to bring forth fruits, but what bee those fruits? It was a smart Inuention of him, that hauing placed the Emperour, and the Pope, reconciled, in their Maiestick Thrones, he brought the States of the world before them. First comes a Counseller of State, with this Motto, *I Advise you two*: then a Courtier, *I Flatter you three*: then a Husbandman, *I Feed you foure*: then a Merchant, *I Coussen you five*: then a Lawyer, *I Robbe you sixe*: then a Souldier, *I Fight for you seuen*: then a Physician, *I Kill you eight*: Lastly, a Priest, *I Absolue you all nine*: This was his Satyre. But in the feare of God, as our Soueraigne doth gouerne vs in Truth and Peace; So let the Counseller aduise, the Iudge censure, the Husbandman labour, Merchant trafficke, the Lawer pleade, the Souldier beare armes, the Diuine preach; all bring forth the fruites of righteousness: that this Kingdome may flourish, and be an exemplary encouragement to our neighbours: that our Children may bee blessed after vs: our Enemies conuincd, Aliens conuer-

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FINIS.